

**Opening Statement of Republican Leader  
Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce  
“Horseracing Integrity Act of 2019”  
September 19, 2019**

*As Prepared for Delivery*

Good morning and welcome to the Consumer Protection and Commerce Subcommittee legislative hearing. Today we will focus on H.R. 1754, the “Horseracing Integrity Act of 2019.”

Horses hold an important place in our shared culture and history, and the industry contributes immensely to local communities across the country.

This is a tough issue and one that your industry is very passionate about.

I appreciate the panel being here today to help us better understand H.R. 1754 and how it will impact your industry.

I’d like to address the Majority’s decision to prevent Representative Barr from providing an opening statement.

Last Congress, when we were in the Majority and held a hearing on this legislation, we extended both Mr. Barr and Mr. Tonko the courtesy of providing opening statements on their own member panel because of their leadership on this issue.

During other legislative hearings this Congress, off-committee Members have been afforded the opportunity to testify on bills they are leading on.

Unfortunately, the Majority has decided not to extend that same courtesy today.

I’d like to use the remainder of my time to read the following statement prepared by Mr. Barr:

Nothing is more synonymous with the Commonwealth of Kentucky than thoroughbred breeding and horseracing...which includes the Horse Capital of the World.

Lexington, Kentucky, is surrounded by more than 400 horse farms and Keeneland hosts many notable races including the Toyota Bluegrass Stakes and the Breeders Cup—which will be held again at the racetrack this fall. With the privilege of representing this unique industry comes the responsibility of fighting for its future.

However, this sport is not solely relevant to those in states that are home to Triple Crown Races, like Kentucky, Maryland, and New York. Horseracing is very much a national sport.

The horse industry contributes approximately \$50 billion in direct economic impact to the U.S. economy and has a direct employment impact of 988,394 jobs. Therefore, advocating for this industry requires more than celebrating its proud heritage.

Currently regulated by 38 separate jurisdictions, the horseracing industry labors under a patchwork of conflicting and inconsistent, state-based rules governing prohibited substances, lab accreditation, testing, and penalties for violations.

This lack of uniformity has impeded interstate commerce, compromised the international competitiveness of the industry, and undermined public confidence in the integrity of the sport.

The Horseracing Integrity Act would remedy these problems by authorizing the creation of a non-governmental anti-doping authority governed by representatives of all major constituencies of the industry and responsible for implementing a national, uniform medication program for the entire horseracing industry.

A national uniform medication program is not about creating more bureaucracy or regulation, rather it is about streamlining the current regulatory structure to ensure the safety of our athletes.

The most recent draft of the Horseracing Integrity Act was developed through a highly deliberative and bipartisan process and takes into consideration a diversity of perspectives from all parts of the industry.

The result is support from a majority of Members of the House. We must build on the momentum in Congress and the industry as a whole to ensure

the safety of our athletes and increase the popularity, public confidence, and international competitiveness of the sport.

I'd like to offer Mr. Barr's full written statement for the record.

Thank you and I yield back.